

Too often, our children visit ultra-modern shopping malls and gleaming sports arenas on weekends, but during the week go to school in rundown or antiquated facilities. This sends exactly the wrong message to our young people about our priorities. We have to do better.

That is why I am deeply grateful to the professionals and parents in the Benton Community School District. There is no question that a quality public education for every child is a top priority in that community. I salute them, and wish them a very successful new school year.●

CARLISLE COMMUNITY EDUCATION

● Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, in Iowa and across the United States, a new school year has begun. As you know, Iowa public schools have an excellent reputation nationwide, and Iowa students' test scores are among the highest in the Nation.

I would like to take just a few minutes, today, to salute the dedicated teachers, administrators, and school board members in the Carlisle Community School District, and to report on their participation in a unique Federal partnership to repair and modernize school facilities.

This fall marks the 10th year of the Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program. That is its formal name, but it is better known among educators in Iowa as the program of Harkin grants for Iowa public schools. Since 1998, I have been fortunate to secure a total of \$121 million for the State government in Iowa, which selects worthy school districts to receive these grants for a range of renovation and repair efforts—everything from updating fire safety systems to building new schools or renovating existing facilities. In many cases, this Federal funding is used to leverage public and/or private local funding, so it often has a tremendous multiplier effect in a local school district.

The Carlisle Community School District received a 2005 Harkin grant totaling \$500,000 which it used to help replace the roof on the existing high school and to help build a new middle school. This school is a modern, state-of-the-art facility that befits the educational ambitions and excellence of this school district. Indeed, it is the kind of school facility that every child in America deserves. The district also received a 2005 fire safety grant totaling \$100,000 which it used to update fire security systems in schools throughout the district.

Excellent schools do not just pop up like mushrooms after a rain. They are the product of vision, leadership, persistence, and a tremendous amount of collaboration among local officials and concerned citizens. I salute the entire staff, administration, and governance in the Carlisle Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—Rob Joiner, Ann Polito, John Judisch, Mark Randleman and Michelle Tish. I would also like to recognize superintendent Tom Lane, district business manager Jean Flaws and Gary Schwartz of the Iowa Department of Education.

As we mark the 10th anniversary of the Harkin school grant program in Iowa, I am obliged to point out that many thousands of school buildings and facilities across the United States are in dire need of renovation or replacement. In my State of Iowa alone, according to a recent study, some 79 percent of public schools need to be upgraded or repaired. The harsh reality is that the average age of school buildings in the United States is nearly 50 years.

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CENTERVILLE COMMUNITY EDUCATION

● Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, in Iowa and across the United States, a new school year has begun. As you know, Iowa public schools have an excellent reputation nationwide, and Iowa students' test scores are among the highest in the Nation.

I would like to take just a few minutes, today, to salute the dedicated teachers, administrators, and school board members in the Centerville Community School District, and to report on their participation in a unique Federal partnership to repair and modernize school facilities.

This fall marks the 10th year of the Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program. That is its formal name, but it is better known among educators in Iowa as the program of Harkin grants for Iowa public schools. Since 1998, I have been fortunate to secure a total of \$121 million for the State government in Iowa, which selects worthy school districts to receive these grants for a range of renovation and repair efforts—everything from updating fire safety systems to building new schools or renovating existing facilities. In many cases, this Federal funding is used to leverage public and/or private local funding, so it often has a tremendous multiplier effect in a local school district.

The Centerville Community School District has received \$1 million in Harkin grant funding to modernize schools

in the district. The district received a 2003 Harkin grant for \$500,000 which it used to help remodel the third floor of the high school and build a modern science center addition. The district also received five fire safety grants totaling \$500,000 to replace outdated electrical systems, to install updated fire alarm systems, to install new emergency lighting and to make other fire safety improvements throughout the district. The Federal grants have made it possible for the district to provide quality and safe schools for their students.

Excellent schools do not just pop up like mushrooms after a rain. They are the product of vision, leadership, persistence, and a tremendous amount of collaboration among local officials and concerned citizens. I salute the entire staff, administration, and governance in the Centerville Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—Chris Hoffman, Steve Hoch, Deborah Watley, Jeri Pershey, Bill Matkovich, Brad Appler and Nick Hindley and former members Richard Roos, Deborah Egeland, Debbie Eurom, Shawna Stickler, Desiree Campbell, Joel Hollatz, Dr. David Fraser, Ray Tresemer and the late Brian Kauzlarich. I would also like to recognize superintendent Richard Turner, former superintendent Dr. Marvin Judkins, buildings and grounds director Ed Shirley and principals Ray Miller, Bruce Karpan and Scott Clark.

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EAST MARSHALL COMMUNITY EDUCATION

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